

## TOOL 13: MONITORING & EVALUATION

### What is the purpose of monitoring and evaluation?

Understanding how successful your sustainability efforts are will be impossible without a carefully planned approach to monitoring and evaluation. During the planning and design phase you will have determined what 'success' looks like and therefore the indicators of success that you select must be able to provide you with an accurate picture.

There is growing recognition that using growth in visitor arrivals and GDP does not provide an accurate picture of the costs associated with tourism or its benefits. As well as looking to general sustainable tourism indicators that are used internationally such as GSTC destination criteria and the STIs recommended by ETC it is important to establish indicators that are meaningful for your own context.

As well as helping to understand progress and achievement, monitoring and evaluation activities will be important for ensuring that your programme is still relevant; the scope is right, changes in needs are understood and new sustainability challenges are planned for.

In broad terms, it is helpful to consider the following focus areas:



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### Programme relevance and scope

Monitoring the situation will help to identify if your approach needs to adapt. For example, new sustainability related legislation may have implications for the tourism sector and require further efforts e.g. the impact of the Green New Deal on transport and mobility, buildings and energy and circular economy principles may require you to build additional elements and support into your programme.

Conducting regular surveys amongst participants and broader sets of stakeholders will help to understand if needs are being met, if needs are changing and to build up a sense of whether everything is heading in the right direction.

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### Guiding principles for monitoring and evaluation of progress and achievement

- Having clearly defined goals, objectives and timescales for your programme is key to being able to effectively measure success.
- Success needs to be measured across 2 dimensions:
  - the tasks that have been **delivered** (the 'effort' or 'output')
  - the **changes** that have resulted from these efforts ('the effect' or 'outcome').

**Example:** If a goal is to support hotels in reducing energy consumption, how will success be measured?

Level	Measures of success
Effort ✓	At an effort level, this may be through the delivery of training on resource efficiency. In this case, success in this area might be measured by evaluating the following:  <b>Was it delivered on time, to budget, and well attended by your target audience?</b>
Effect ★ ★ ★	At the effect level, you will want to measure the extent to which this training helped realise your goal.  In the first instance, you might get feedback from participants relating to <b>improved knowledge/skills etc and a commitment to action</b> . However, you will also need to measure the extent to which this commitment translates into actions taken, and ultimately to energy savings.

**This highlights that monitoring & evaluation needs to be multi-layered and built in across the programme – not just at the end.**

Establishing progress indicators, such as some of those outlined above, are therefore very important in helping you sense-check what has been achieved so far, and what changes or improvements you might need to make to keep you on track towards achieving the goal. Think of it as a continuous review process that informs planning, adapting and improving.



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### A few tips:

#### Don't just develop indicators based on what information you have, or can easily collect.

This is a common mistake and leads organisations to gather data based on what exists, rather than what's most meaningful. It is better to work out first what data is **most impactful**, i.e. what would best illustrate that a goal has been achieved and focus on this instead. This also avoids another common mistake of trying to measure everything, with the result that you end up drowning in data.

#### Recognise your limitations on what can realistically be measured.

There may be practical limitations to what data can be gathered. In these instances, it is worth thinking laterally and developing 'proxy' indicators. For example, if you cannot measure the volume of litter on the beaches, you could ask for visitor feedback on their perceptions of beach cleanliness and measure changes in perception over time. This is why it is also important that you establish solid baselines at the beginning, so you have good data, against which to measure progress.

#### Consider a range of data sources to draw from

When designing a monitoring & evaluation framework (an essential step at the planning phase), consider also the range of potential data sources on which you might draw from. Rather than setting up lots of new data gathering mechanisms, it is worth checking in with other stakeholders to find out what data they collect. For example, tourism associations, NGOs and research institutions may already be gathering some of the data that you need.

#### Looking out for unintended or indirect impacts

Finally, although you should focus on measuring changes that arise as a direct result of your activities (or 'efforts'), you also need to be aware of potential unintended or indirect impacts. Some of these can be identified in advance through a **risk assessment**, and appropriate indicators developed, while others may remain hidden until activities are delivered. In this case, when reviewing progress, it is always worth asking "might the positive impacts that are being achieved in one area be contributing to negative impacts in another?" e.g. could a move towards increased procurement of local fresh produce by the tourism sector drive up food prices for residents or impact on the availability of certain goods?

